

All Aboard for Boston!

A Great Place to Study Human Nature Is the Grand Central Station

Some one has said that the best thing in Boston is the train out of it to New York, so, by correct antithesis, the worst thing in New York should be the train to Boston. It isn't, but that is only because there are so many worst things in New York that it would need a twentieth century Paris to make a choice.

But the train, in its way, is interesting. It takes a man in a fleeting instant to a place where he can see the world as it is. It is a place where the human mind is at work, and where the human body is at rest. It is a place where the human soul is at home, and where the human heart is at ease.

THE WEALTHY GIRL AND HER RETINUE. A woman approaches the opening and in that moment which has been ever before her, she looks at the man who is standing there, and she sees that he is a man of the world. She sees that he is a man of the world, and she sees that he is a man of the world.

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THE FRESH AIR FUNDERS.

shown in the line which wound in serpentine length from the ticket window. A young woman who mopped her brow with a handkerchief, stepped outside of the line for a moment to get her breath; when she attempted to return she was met by the barrier of a man's elbow in a wide pink stripe. He was accompanied by a henneped family, a wilted woman and four awkward-aged daughters, whose legs and arms looked like sticks of spaghetti. He had retained all the flesh of the family.

"No, you don't," he said to the young woman; "you've lost your place and you don't get back here."

He looked about, and his family dutifully smiled approval. "But it is my place," remonstrated the young woman. "I just stepped out to get a breath of air."

"Well, I don't care what you stepped out for, this line don't wait for people to get air or soda water or anything else."

Behind the gelatin-like family a young man beckoned to the girl. "Step in here," he remarked genially. "I saw you when you stepped out. It's all right."

She took the place gratefully. A moment later a stentorian voice announced the departure of the train for which the pink-striped man was waiting to purchase tickets.

"Can't wait for tickets!" And the family dropped out of the line. The young woman, catching the wrathful eye, could not forbear a comment.

"You might just as well have been a gentleman."

The man looked encyclopaedias of wrath and raged on.

Such incidents are by no means rare, nor are they confined to one sex. They recall the famous remonstrance of the French woman to a *compagnon de voyage*: "Sir, are you a gentleman?" And the answer: "No, madam, I am a traveller."

Outside the station, in the enclosure about the departing trains, there are other troubles. Said a departing woman to a trainman: "I want the train to So-and-so."

"On Track 13."

"Track 13?"

"Yes'm."

"But I can't travel on Track 13."

He does not show any of the sympathy

known. After that we went to dinner at the T—, we forgot we were not in New York and asked for cocktails. I wish you could have seen that waiter's face! If you ever want to feel cool on a hot day, just go to the T— and ask for a cocktail. It's better than going into a cold storage place. He said: "You can't get cocktails unless you are going to get your dinner here." He seemed to know that we did not live there, as if Boston would not harbor anything that might be asked for cocktails in that brazen way.

"We told him meekly that we intended to eat there. He went away and came back with the menu. Apparently he did not believe us. He must order the dinner first," he said firmly.

"We ordered it. When you are at Rome," you know. He went away and we, dying of thirst, talked about Oliver Wendell Holmes and Boston Common and the new subway—it's still the new subway over there—and Ralph Waldo Emerson and compared his essay on Friendship with—oh, I forgot what we compared it with. But the waiter came back with the soup and then the fish, and then, after we had plucked up a little courage and asked for the State flower of New York, he came back with a slip of paper for us to

sign. We had to tell our names, the ages of our fathers and mothers, the color of their hair and eyes and a report of the incidents of the day. He went away and we, with great pomp and ceremony, deposited the two books in his hands. He scrutinized the money we gave him very carefully as if he had doubts as to its genuineness and hit the tip on the edge of it. He was so sure that the money was true to her up-bringing.

"I don't think it's nearly as bad as the way they do it in New York. I was taken to dinner at M—'s. You know the place. To go there is what Manhattanites call seeing life. At long last she comes so near that she almost touches him as she looks closely at his profile form. Suddenly he opens his half-closed eyes and meets her's straightforwardly.

"Rubber!" he ejaculates, contemptuously, and relapses into his former semi-consciousness.

The woman looks as scared as if a corpse had suddenly spoken, and does not look around until she is at further end of the enclosure. The people in the vicinity

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"There was a funny on-hand performance. I am sure he slipped something into the waiter's hand, although I couldn't, of course, say so positively, but anyhow, when the cocktail order was filled there were two brought just the same, and rather than make a fuss the man had to drink them both."

There was a clang of iron gates. "Train's gone," said the trackman, as the girls came to themselves and looked at the train. "Why, we wanted it?"

"Sorry, there's another at 1 o'clock."

Contrasts meet the eye at every turn, at this rendezvous of all sorts and conditions of men. There was a time when the city woman only wore her white gowns

who have been "rubbering" too move away as if pulled by hidden strings, and the young man is left in peace.

There is a fresh air fund starting on its travels. It is composed of about thirty small boys who look expectant. They are bound for Kenosha, so it is stated on the ticket which each one bears, and which he proudly displays as a badge of merit.

They have all the external marks of the tenement districts: some of them inert and lifeless. From them the host has taken what little vitality they had to spare. Some have the Mulberry Bend in their legs; some are sturdy specimens of young America, with inherent promise.

They all carry queer bundles done up in newspaper—always in newspaper, and tied firmly with string. These bundles are sometimes carried by long strings, sometimes thrust into the front of inherited trousers, sometimes under the arms. The youths carry other treasures, too. One is the proud possessor of a bat, another of a ball, another of a broken hoop, and one of a bedraggled kitten, with a single hair from a Boston woman's surveyor's thumb curiously. She levels her eyeglasses on the bundles.

"What have you in those bundles?" she asks one of the boys. "Bathing suits?"

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The very proud of these bundles and carry them ostentatiously. It is the sure enough mark that they are really travelling on a real train and are going to a strange place. It would not seem quite so grown up and interesting to start off without baggage.

The boys are all very willing to talk. They expect to have the time of their lives. There are no unwilling victims of University Settlement reform among them; they are longing for the fields and the fresh milk and the unrestrained of the country. But it would be safe to wager that they will play traps under the bridges while the rolling takes the place of the city cops. One small boy with shifty eyes expresses regret at the non-appearance of a playmate.

"He couldn't come," he explains, "his mother won't let him. My mother" [and he swells his tiny chest importantly] "will let me go anywhere and let me stay as long as I want to."

Then the signal is given and the awkward squad moves on toward the iron grating, the young man on the stretcher looking after them with longing eyes.

Another place of interest in the Grand Central is the baggage room. The rest of the big places seems crowded and noisy until one goes in there and then, in comparison, outside is as peaceful as the morning after the ball.

A young woman with a dress lifted almost to her knee, in the unconscious way which only the woman with Louis XV heels and openwork stockings displays to perfection, is surrounded by baggage-men. She has four trunks, and she is looking after all of them herself. Close to her, a tired, stout man, who is fanning himself vigorously with a palm leaf, is gathering in a harvest of checks.

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"Oh, off at 9:32?" he questions. "I thought you said—"

"Oh, I mean the 10:02, of course," and the baggage-man and those about him smile broadly as a rattler, the baggage room of the Grand Central cannot be better.

The eternal feminine is retailing her woes here, too.

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"I had a magazine article which showed just how to do it. I drew a diagram of the trunk, according to that, and followed the rules precisely. I had to do it over five times, but I looked like a custard pie when I had finished. Then I went out, and sat nonchalantly on the porch until the trunk and bags were away carelessly, 'I do miss John so when I have to pack.'"

"Just then the woman who has a room next to mine came tumbling downstairs, shrieking with grief."

"Did you know you forgot to put the tray in your trunk?"

"Of course everything I wanted was in the tray, for, according to the magazine article, if you put everything in the tray it will be easy to find it when you get to your destination."

One young woman whose appearance would certainly promise something better in the way of refinement is moved by that morbid impulse which prompts people to stop at street accidents, attend funerals and look on at the scene of a crime.

The young man is watching her and trying his best to restrain the wrath bubbling up within. At long last she comes so near that she almost touches him as she looks closely at his profile form. Suddenly he opens his half-closed eyes and meets her's straightforwardly.

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